LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A system for monitoring a call forwarded to a network-based voice mail system (VMS), comprising:

a central office switch (CO) connected to the VMS and customer premises equipment (CPE) associated with a called party, the CO operative to receive a call to a called party number, forward the call to the VMS, receive a call monitoring provisioned signal from the VMS, wherein the call monitoring provisioned signal indicates that call monitoring is allowed, and in response to the call monitoring provisioned signal, to send an activate call monitoring data message and a call monitoring alert signal to the CPE associated with the called party; and

the VMS operative to send the call monitoring provisioned signal to the CO.

2. (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein the VMS is further operative to:

determine if a calling party exits the called party's voice mailbox; and

if the calling party exits the called party's voice mailbox, then to send a deny all monitoring signal to the CO.

3. (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein the call monitoring provisioned signal is a start of greeting signal sent by the VMS when the VMS plays a called party's voice mail greeting.

4. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein the call monitoring provisioned signal is an end of greeting signal sent by the VMS upon the completion of a called party's voice mail greeting.

5. (Original) The system of Claim 4, wherein the end of greeting signal also acts as a record message indicator.

6. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein the CPE associated with the called party is operative to generate an alert to the called party in response to receiving the call monitoring alert signal from the CO.

7. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 6, wherein the alert comprises a distinctive sound generated by the CPE associated with the called party.

8. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 6, wherein the alert comprises a visual indicator on the CPE associated with the called party.

9. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein the CPE associated with the called party is operative to go off-hook and to activate a speaker assembly in response to receiving the activate call monitoring data message.

10. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 9, wherein the CPE associated with the called party is operative to send an on-hook signal to a second CPE and an intercept tone to the CO, if the CPE associated with the called party receives an intercept indicator, further comprising:

the second CPE connected to the CO and the CPE associated with the called party, the second CPE operative to go on-hook in response to receiving the on-hook signal.

11. (Original) The system of Claim 10, wherein the intercept tone is a Dual-Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) signal.

12. (Original) The system of Claim 10, wherein one signal has the dual function of indicating on-hook to the second CPE and indicating interception to the CO.

13. (Original) A method for monitoring a call forwarded to a network based voice mail system comprising:

receiving a forwarded call;

determining whether the call can be monitored;

if the call can be monitored, then sending a call monitoring alert signal and an activate call monitoring message to customer premises equipment (CPE) associated with a called party;

receiving an intercept tone from the CPE; and

causing the called party to be connected to a calling party.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13, further comprising:

detecting a voice mail code sent by the called party; and

acting on the voice mail code.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the voice mail code is a Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) sequence.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein determining if the call can be monitored comprises:

determining if the call was forwarded prior to being received as a forwarded call; and

if the call was previously forwarded, then to deny call monitoring.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein the intercept tone is a Dual Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) tone.

18. (Previously Presented) A method for monitoring a call forwarded to a network based voice mail system (VMS) comprising:

receiving a call to a called party number;

determining whether the call should be forwarded to the VMS;

if the determination is that the call should be forwarded to the VMS, then forwarding the call to the VMS;

receiving a call monitoring provisioned signal from the VMS indicating that call monitoring is allowed; and

in response to receiving the call monitoring provisioned signal from the VMS:

sending a call monitoring alert signal and sending an activate call monitoring data message indicating that call monitoring is available to customer premises equipment (CPE) associated with the called party number; and

connecting the VMS to the CPE.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the provisioned signal is a start of greeting signal received from the VMS when the VMS plays the called party's voice mail greeting.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the provisioned signal is an end of greeting signal received from the VMS upon the completion of the called party's voice mail greeting.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the call monitoring alert signal is a distinctive ring pattern.

22. (Original) The method of Claim 18, further comprising:

receiving an intercept signal from the CPE associated with the called party number; and

in response to receiving the intercept signal, maintaining a connection with the VMS for a predetermined time period.

23. (Original) The method of Claim 18, further comprising:

receiving an intercept signal from the CPE associated with the called party number; and

in response to receiving the intercept signal, disconnecting the VMS.

24. (Original) The method of Claim 23, wherein the intercept signal is a DTMF signal.

25. (Original) The method of Claim 18, further comprising:

receiving a signal from the CPE associated with the called party number that dually functions as an intercept signal and a voice mail code.

26. (Currently Amended) A method for monitoring a call forwarded to a network based voice mail system (VMS) comprising:

receiving a call forwarded to a voice mailbox associated with a called party number from a central office switch;

playing a voice message greeting associated with the called party number;

when the voice message greeting begins playing, sending a start of greeting signal from the VMS to the central office switch so that call monitoring is allowed if the central office switch is provisioned to begin call monitoring upon receipt of the start of greeting signal; and

~~playing a voice message greeting associated with the called party number; and~~

sending an end of greeting signal upon completion of the voice message greeting from the VMS to the central office switch so that call monitoring is allowed if the central office switch is provisioned to begin call monitoring upon receipt of the end of greeting signal.

27. (Original) The method of Claim 26, further comprising:

receiving a voice mail code associated with a voice mail function; and

in response to receiving the voice mail code, performing the voice mail function.

28. (Original) The method of Claim 27, wherein the voice mail code comprises a Dual Tone Multi Function (DTMF) signal.

29. (Original) The method of Claim 26, further comprising:

determining if a calling party exits the called party's voice mailbox; and

if the calling party exits the called party's voice mailbox, then sending a deny call monitoring signal to the central office switch.

30. (Original) A method for monitoring a call forwarded to a network based voice mail system comprising:

receiving a call monitoring alert signal from a central office switch (CO);

in response to receiving the call monitoring alert signal, providing an alert to a called party;

receiving an activate call monitoring data message from the CO; and

in response to receiving the activate call monitoring data message, going off-hook and engaging a speaker assembly to monitor the call.

31. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein providing an alert comprises generating a sound.

32. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein providing an alert comprises providing a distinctive ring pattern.

33. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein providing an alert comprises providing a visual indicator.

34. (Original) The method of Claim 30, further comprising:

receiving an intercept indicator; and

in response to receiving the intercept indicator, sending an intercept signal to the CO.

35. (Original) The method of Claim 34, wherein the intercept signal comprises a DTMF signal.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 34, wherein a plurality of customer premises equipment (CPE) adapted to support call monitoring is connected to the called party's line, further comprising:

receiving an intercept indicator; and

in response to receiving the intercept indicator, sending an intercept signal to the CO and sending an on-hook signal to all other CPEs.

37. (Original) The method of Claim 36, wherein the intercept signal and the on-hook signal are the same signal.

38. (Original) The method of Claim 30, further comprising:

receiving a voice mail code; and

sending the voice mail code to the VMS.